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The EPA Times

Day Care Progress

Ribbon-cutting for the Early Environments Child Development Center will take place Tuesday, September 8 with a concert by the EPA Band and Chorus under the direction of Mary McInnis. Opening date is the 14th... Alice Lazun, the director, has degrees in early childhood education, developmental-clinical psychology and nursing, and more than a decade of experience teaching in and directing child development centers... About eighty-five percent of the spaces are now committed; most openings still available are for three and four year-olds... The last fundraiser brought in \$27,000 and the recent dance netted \$5,200. More events are planned for the summer and fall... Both Jim Barnes and Lee Thomas believe the Center is a vital EPA initiative and thank all who have labored so assiduously to bring it into being.



The EPA Headquarters chapter of Women in Science and Engineering (EPA/WISE) held its seventh annual luncheon recently at Channel Inn. From left, Dr. Yvonne Weber, Energy and Water Resources Team, OFA; Fran Phillips, guest speaker and Deputy Regional Administrator, R-6; Rob Cahill, Associate Administrator for Regional Operations.

Smoking Policy: Here at Last

Pursuant to GSA regulations, Morgan Kinghorn, Acting Assistant for Administration and Resources Management, has published the long-awaited policy on smoking in EPA facilities. Restrooms, certain areas in cafeterias and other spaces may be designated to permit smoking. These areas will be provided with signs and non-combustible ashtrays. Exhaust from designated smoking areas must be vented directly outside the building. Smoking areas in cafeterias will be selected so as to minimize nonsmoker exposure. Signs indicating that smoking is prohibited except in designated areas will be provided at entrances to space controlled by EPA. Smoking areas may not be designated in the following locations:

- General office space occupied by personnel performing their daily functions, including but not limited to private offices, open office space, clerical pools, ADP areas, mail rooms, file rooms, duplicating facilities, etc.
- Auditoria, classrooms and conference rooms.
- Elevators, corridors and stairwells.
- Clinics and health units.
- Shuttle and other vehicles for transporting EPA employees on official business.
- Hazardous areas with flammable liquids and gases or readily combustible materials such as copy centers, printing facilities and storage areas.
- Libraries.

At Headquarters, the Director, Occupational Health and Safety Staff, is responsible for designating smoking areas. Assistant and Associate Administrators, the General Counsel, the Inspector General and heads of staff offices are responsible for

assuring compliance within their organizational units. Senior management officials outside Headquarters are responsible for designating smoking areas and implementing the policy at their locations. The Director, Occupational Health and Safety Staff, is responsible for developing this policy, supporting it and following through.

Appeals for exceptions may be made to officials responsible for designating smoking areas, but will only be granted in extraordinary or unique circumstances. However, to help the addicted overcome their habit, EPA will coordinate, facilitate and even fund smoking-cessation programs for groups of employees short of treatment and rehabilitation. Smokers may also receive assistance from the Agency's Employee Counseling and Assistance Program (ECAP). EPA is not permitted to fund individual cessation initiatives,

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AGI Strikes Again!

Analysis Group, Inc. (AGI), which won the Administrator's award for the Outstanding Minority Business Enterprise of 1986, continues to lead the pack. In April this year AGI was cited by the Small Business Administration (SBA) as Mid-Atlantic Regional Prime Contractor of the Year, beating out hundreds of nominees submitted by federal agencies. Competing with the other nine regional winners, AGI then earned SBA's award as the National Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year, the first time a minority firm had ever been so named.

AGI has gained international renown for developing a computerized decision-tree to assist on-scene coordinators at the site of oil

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Smoking—(Continued from front.)

medical or otherwise. Senior management officials at all locations are obliged to bargain with local unions in the process of implementing the policy, but are not authorized to alter the substance of the regulations.

EPA officials believe this new policy is tough, but reasonable, considering the proven deleterious effects of sidestream smoking for the non-smoking majority, and the many lost hours, lower productivity and higher cost of illness among smokers. Such regulations are consistent with EPA's health leadership role in American society, and were, in any case, mandated by GSA as of February 6, 1987. They were developed only after long consultation and negotiation with the union and other employee groups. Management is convinced that the new regulations are equitable and that most employees will adjust to them in the proper spirit. During the first six months, penalties for noncompliance will be limited to warnings and reprimands, and the Agency will assess the need for additional steps.

AGI—(Continued from front.)

spills and for other technical and managerial innovations. The decision-tree opens a new era in sophisticated spill-response technology. Reaction to the tree has been enthusiastic, and the EPA Project Officer has received numerous unsolicited encomia regarding the expertise, dedication and professionalism exhibited by AGI staff, and the fast turn-around and quality of their emergency responses.

The company has served the Federal Highway Administration, the Departments of Energy and Defense, the Agency for International Development and the Federal Aviation Administration, among others, not to speak of state governments, private industry and several leading universities. Of its 55 professional staff, 40 have advanced degrees, including 15 with Ph.Ds. Program managers say they are continually impressed by AGI's ability to deliver exceptional services well within budget and on schedule.

Smoking Policy—Is It Working?

The Headquarters Facilities Management and Services Division (FMSD) July meeting devoted considerable time to complaints about the new smoking policy and the inconvenience of certain designated smoking restrooms. In most cases, no one has to walk up or down more than one flight of stairs, but some said the restrooms were too smoky. Nelson Hallman (FMSD) said he would check into the possibility of boosting air-exhaust rates. A few days later a petition to John Chamberlin with 225 signatures asked that smoking "be worked out by individual offices," but

this approach could not protect health in buildings like the Waterside complex with 100-percent recirculated air. Most observers think there will be a high rate of voluntary compliance with the policy because employees are aware of the dangers of cigarette smoke and because they helped draft the policy. However, an initial non-random survey by the *Times* indicates that in not a few offices conditions haven't changed much—smokers are still puffing blissfully away and non-smokers are still fuming.

Early Bird Nest Egg

Federal and postal employees are putting an average of \$5 million per day of their own money into the new tax-deferred thrift investment program. The interest rate changes monthly: during April the fund paid 7 and 5/8ths, during May 8 and 3/8ths and in June 8 and 5/8ths percent. As of 1988 FERS people can split their investments among the G-fund, a guaranteed fund paying a flat rate, or a stock fund whose rate is pegged to market performance.

A civil servant earning \$32,000 per annum could have \$1,400 more in his tax-deferred savings plan at the end of the year than a coworker who waits until the last minute to convert from CSRS. Actual amounts would depend

on salary and rate of contributions.

Workers under the FERS system can invest as much as 10 percent of pay (up to \$7,000 this year). They can also get government contributions to their accounts of one percent for each one percent they put in, up to 5 percent of pay. Those who stay in the CSRS program can contribute only 5 percent of salary to the thrift plan and get no matching payment.

Pension plan experts do not advise federal or postal workers to make decisions solely on the basis of the thrift plan. But for those who have already decided to convert to FERS, an early move bears obvious tax and investment advantages this year.

* The Real Cost of Office Automation

The rapid proliferation of personal computers (PCs) in various headquarters and regional offices justifies a brief look at this historical process. To many, equipment is the essence of automation, but the real costs must be measured in terms of the time, money and labor invested in designing and introducing new procedures, including

- The time to define organizational problems and determine if they can be wholly or partially addressed through automation.
- The cost of training employees to use hardware and software, and managers to supervise them.

- The cost of reorganizing work stations and data flow.

- The cost of restructuring data and data collection methods to accommodate the inherent limitations and advantages of computers.

The biggest burden, however, is intellectual—changing the way we think. Automation compels us to reconceive means and ends. Being forced to reexamine comfortable old routines and deploy new ones requires significant mental and emotional energy. But as one wag said, "it helps to know you have no choice."

Bicentennial of the Constitution

Two centuries ago representatives of the American states convened in Philadelphia to junk the Articles of Confederation, hoping to bring unity and order out of post-colonial chaos. During months of fierce argument and compromise they drafted a new national Constitution, and on September 17, 1787, announced it to a disbelieving world. But the skeptics have been confounded.

No such plan of self-government has ever lasted so long. None has proven more resilient or a shrewder means of governing multiethnic societies operating on a continental scale. Today, with its amendments, the Constitution is the bulwark of our liberties, without whose protections no one would be safe. Our thanks to the founding fathers and all their successors who have labored to perfect the U.S. Constitution, the most influential political document in human history!

OEA's Youth Program

The Office of External Affairs conducted a series of weekly seminars at EPA Headquarters throughout the summer for 395 4-H Club delegates and their leaders from all parts of the nation. Under the direction of Peggy Knight and Melba Meador, the Office of Community and Intergovernmental relations brought in speakers from various program offices to address participants on a range of world-environmental and related issues. The Public Information Center provided packets of EPA publications for background.

Books For Kids

In collaboration with Headquarters Library, OEA's Office of Community and Intergovernmental Relations has produced an attractive brochure as part of EPA's expanded youth program. Entitled "Books for Young People on Environmental Issues", the brochure lists publications both by grade level and subject, and is available at the Headquarters Library and the Public Information Center.

Delaware Achiever

The winner of Region 3's Environmental Achievement Award for 1986 is Marjorie Crofts, coordinator of Delaware's Inland Bay environmental education program. Crofts was selected from among 57 nominees because of her outstanding program to enlighten citizens about the importance of inland waterways. The Delaware Department of Natural Resources has long been concerned about pollution threats to Rehoboth, Indian River and Little Assawoman Bays. Crofts developed innovative workshops to alert Sussex County children, teachers and parents to these threats, giving them a sense of what they can do pragmatically to help.

Workshops advised homeowners on septic tanks, farm manure management, chemical runoff, trash disposal, tourism and diverse other topics. Some 1200 students displayed control projects and performed environmental parodies and pasquils at an Inland Bays Appreciation Day.

Crofts, 27, began working for the state as an intern while earning her A.M. Degree in Marine Policy. Currently, she is Inland Bay education program coordinator in the Division of Water Resources.

Per Diem Rates Up

The General Services Administration has granted some cost relief to EPA travelers, especially in the southern regions. As of August 1, 1987, it has

- Raised the standard CONUS rate from \$50 to \$60.
- Revised the way M&IE allowance is paid on the first and last day of travel to reimburse on a quarter-day basis.
- Increased per-diem rates for many existing localities.
- Dropped itemization of M&IE expenses when actual subsistence is authorized for lodging only.
- Boosted the mileage reimbursement rate for POVs from 20.5 to 21 cents.

For more information, contact your local Senior Budget Officer, Management Division Director, Administrative Officer or Servicing Financial Management Officer.

Thomas Gets SEA Award

Lee Thomas received the Senior Executive Association's Board of Directors Award on July 15, 1987 for his pursuit of excellence in federal management. Specifically, he was recognized for his efforts to assure the full participation of career executives in the Agency's decisionmaking process and his emphasis on human resources development. The award has been presented in past years to Senator John Warner, Representatives Frank Wolf, Steny Hoyer and Vic Fazio, and GSA Administrator Terrence Golden. The employees of EPA have long applauded the Administrator for his down-to-earth management style and concern for their welfare.

GSA Product Hotline

The General Services Administration provides EPA with many items such as paper products, office equipment, power tools and so forth. If any of these items fails to work properly GSA would like to know about it. Call the Quality Hotline (FTS 557-1368; Commercial-703 prefix). You can even file a formal complaint. Your call will be recorded seven days a week around the clock, but a real person will get back to you within 24 hours. A specialist will follow up and advise you of the action taken.

Losing Lard, Living Longer

Medical scientists in Region 6 have discovered a new 100-percent-effective means of generating depression. They just ask the experimental subject to check out the new computerized scales in their health room. Not only does the new machine weigh one with terrifying accuracy, it bosses one around in the process. "Stand still!" is one of its favorite commands. "You can do better!" is another. "You're a slob" it goes on. Mary Hellen Worden, Health and Safety Officer, admits the thing is somewhat intimidating, but it helps staff fight the battle of the bulge. For

Excellence in Management Awards



Administrator Lee M. Thomas, at a recent headquarters ceremony, presented the Excellence in Management Award to ten EPA employees. This award is granted annually to employees in the Performance Management and Recognition System whose reports facilitated major progress toward Agency goals. This year's winners are: David Davis, Office of External Affairs (recently transferred to the Office of Water); Harold Geren, Region 10; Anne Lindsay, Office of Pesticide Programs; Hugh McKinnon, Office of Research and Development; Linda Murphy, Region 1; David O'Connor, Office of Administration and Resources Management; Thomas O'Farrell, Office of Water; Susan Vogt, Office of Toxic Substances; Deanna Wieman, Region 9; and C. Alvin Yorke, Region 8.

Living Longer — (continued from page 3)

those of us in Headquarters and elsewhere who don't have talking scales yet, the motivation for a higher level of fitness will have to come from within. That means aerobic exercise, sufficient rest and proper diet, to wit

- Lay off the greasy kid-stuff. As prophylaxis against heart disease and cancer, no more than 30 percent of your daily calories should come from fats (animal or vegetable).

- Stash the shaker. The sodium in salt and processed foods aggravates high blood pressure. Limit sodium intake to no more than 3,000 mg. a day. To get an idea of how fast it adds up, look at a typical soup can label.

- Terminate the twinkies. Satisfy your sweet tooth with fruit instead of garbage.

- Eat lots of fish, chicken breast, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, nuts, fibrous cereals and skim milk.

- Big Mac, Go Back! Limit junk-food attacks to once a week. Sample the salad bar.

You, too, can be a centenarian! (This country will have two million of them by the year 2050.)

Phone Assistance

Customer Assistance in the Headquarters Accounting Operations Branch has installed a new telephone answering system that will eliminate busy signals, long ring-times and unmanned lines. Calls are now processed up to 30 percent faster and during non-business hours are answered with a tape asking one to call back from 8-12 and 1-5. If you have a question, call Customer Assistance on 382-5116.

Maneuvering Around Heimlich

The Heimlich maneuver we touted in the June issue as the optimal treatment for choking victims must never be used in incidents of near-drowning. Dr. James Orłowski of the Cleveland Clinic has found that in such cases it may cause the victim to vomit and further block the air passages, thus posing the risk of gastric aspiration pneumonia and brain damage from oxygen deprivation. One 10-year-old boy died in these circumstances.

Intern Encomium

by Brian Fellows

Never having worked for the government, I didn't really know what to expect when I signed up as a summer intern in the Office of Congressional Liaison. However, I was thrust into the job in *medias res*—the best way to learn. My position required me to attend House and Senate hearings and mark-ups and compile a report based on my findings. Even my eight years of university training did not entirely prepare me for a task of such complexity, but I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. In fact, I feel honored to have been selected. There were, of course, as for any tyro, moments of horseplay, e.g., when I was asked to deliver a "vital document" from the eighth level of the West Tower to the remotest corner of the NE Mall. I felt like the apprentice on the shop floor who is sent to find a left-handed monkey-wrench, but I made it over and back in less than an hour!

Another notable aspect of the summer was the experience of the federal city itself. Those in charge of the program arranged a great variety of tours and speakers to acquaint us with Washington and EPA programs. Compared to other departments and agencies, EPA interns are apparently getting a much broader educational experience. Many say that as a consequence they would enjoy working with the agency upon graduation.

We certainly utilized a range of skills—that gave us a real sense of worth and validation. I hated to leave, and I strongly recommend the EPA intern program for other young workaholics in the years ahead.

Painter of American Rivers

Bill Painter was recently recognized by American Rivers (AR), a leading conservation group, for his many years of outstanding service on the AR Board of Directors. Painter was born in Richmond, Virginia, and grew up in that area. He graduated from Duke University with a BS in biology, and received an MS in Zoology from the University of Michigan. From 1970 to 1973, he served as director of the

Washington Ecology Center, and then accepted an offer to become the executive director of the burgeoning American Rivers Conservation Council. His accomplishments were many, but one stands out—his advocacy on behalf of the New River in North Carolina, then threatened by a pumped-storage project. As a result of Painter's labors, a 26-mile stretch of the New River became a National Wild and Scenic River in 1976.

Departing the Council, Painter haunted the halls of Congress on behalf of a number of activist groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, where he headed the toxic waterwatch project, and Defenders of Wildlife. He is currently working on water issues with OPPE. He and his wife, Kathy, live on Capitol Hill with their two children, Kierstan, 18, and Emily, 8.

Choosing Your Retirement System

Between July 1 and December 31, 1987, EPA employees hired before 1984 will have a one-time opportunity to choose between two retirement systems: the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), which covers them now, and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), designed for employees hired after 1983.

CSRS provides all of its benefits from one source: the CSRS annuity fund into which you pay seven percent of your base annual income, not including overtime pay. CSRS also allows employees to invest up to five percent of their pay in the new thrift savings plan. Both the amount contributed and any earned interest are tax-deferred until they are withdrawn, but there is no government matching payment.

While a CSRS annuity can be as much as 80 percent of the three years of highest salary, 30-year annuities generally average 56 percent. Annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs) equal the cost of inflation and protect retiree buying power.

FERS provides benefits from three different sources: social security (SS), a basic benefit plan and the thrift savings plan. Under FERS, the combined cost of basic benefits and SS equals seven percent of pay.

Employees also can invest up to 10 percent of their base pay in the thrift savings plan, and government contributes as much as five percent more. Even if an employee puts nothing into the thrift plan, government will contribute one percent of salary.

FERS allows employees to retire earlier (age 55 with 10 years' service) with a reduced annuity (five percent less for each year an employee receives benefits before age 62). For example, someone retiring at age 55 would get 35 percent less. Under FERS, COLAs don't begin until age 62 and are one percent less than the rate of inflation, if and only if inflation is three percent or more per annum. If inflation is less than three percent, you get no COLA. (CSRS-covered employees who transfer to FERS can take advantage of the early retirement option and receive full COLAs on the portion of their benefit earned under CSRS.)

Are you within 10 years of retirement? CSRS may be better if you plan to retire at age 55 with 30 years of service or age 60 with 20 years of service. CSRS offers a more generous annuity plus full COLA at an earlier age (55 vs. 62 under FERS). The FERS COLA is generally one percent less than inflation, as stated above.

CSRS may be a wiser choice if earning additional SS credits isn't important to you. You may already have enough credits to qualify for benefits, or have so few credits that you have no expectation of ever receiving SS benefits, or you may plan to supplement your CSRS check by qualifying for SS after retirement.

FERS may be preferable if you have five or more years of SS coverage—but not the full 10 years generally required for benefits. Joining FERS enables you to get a return on the SS taxes you already have paid. Otherwise, if you don't complete your 10 years under FERS or elsewhere, you will lose funds already paid in SS taxes.

FERS may also be a better choice in these three cases:

- You want to retire before age 55 but won't have 30 years of service. FERS allows you to retire at age 55 with as few as 10 years of service, but with a reduced annuity. Under this early retirement option, you can also receive your (reduced) CSRS-derived

portion of benefits earlier than would be possible under CSRS per se.

- You have close to 42 years of service and plan to work a few extra years. The CSRS maximum 80 percent benefit is reached after 41 years and 11 months of service. Since FERS has no maximum, those at or close to the CSRS maximum could earn additional benefits by transferring to FERS.

- You plan to work until a rather advanced retirement age. FERS can provide more valuable benefits in this case. The retirement value of your Thrift Plan account increases with age as your account balance grows and the number of years diminishes before you will be retired. Under FERS, government matching payments make the Thrift Plan a bigger chunk of your overall benefit.

Are you far from retirement age? Many employees who are 20 years or more from retirement don't know whether they will retire from the federal government. Others already contemplate shifting to the private sector. In either situation FERS may be the wiser choice: SS is portable. Thrift Plan earnings can be left to accumulate or transferred either into a personal individual retirement account (IRA) or a pension plan set up by your new employer.

If you leave federal service and request a refund of your contributions, FERS pays you market-rate interest. By contrast, CSRS generally pays no interest. FERS also offers greater adaptability and portability.

If you are sure you will remain in government until retirement, CSRS maybe better. Not only does it offer a higher annuity than the FERS basic benefit and social security combined, but it allows unreduced COLAs at an earlier age. Should you leave government, request a refund and then return to federal service, CSRS allows you to make a full refund—with an interest charge. FERS offers no such provisions.

For those with between 5 and 15 years until retirement, the FERS Transfer Handbook is the best source of information about the pros and cons of transferring or remaining in CSRS.

A Little Stiff from Wheeling

by Lee Blackburn, Region 3



Biker Zickler

No, he's not short and he's not from West Virginia. He's Mike Zickler, a Region 3 senior on-scene coordinator (OSC) who gets sore muscles from wheeling his bike to work from Moorestown, N.J.

Zickler, who began his EPA career as a permit writer in Chicago (Region 5), saddles up every day, weather permitting, for the pure delight of the ride. "I'm not into equipment the way some people are. I guess I'm more of a schlepper." He says it takes longer to get to work than driving, but his metabolism has become more efficient. "You can drink more chocolate malts and still not add those extra pounds. Plus you get the convenience and you don't face the hassle of parking a car and shelling out hard-earned cash for the privilege."

Like the rest of us, Zickler had a bike in junior high, but hadn't ridden one for years. Then, one day, heading into the Loop in downtown Chicago, he noticed the endless streams of cyclists negotiating the bike paths alongside the road. That got him started

and he's been on two wheels ever since. As an environmentalist, he thinks it only natural that EPA should encourage employees to bike to work. "You can't deny it's energy efficient," he asserts.

What began as a personal preference has become a cause. For the past several years Zickler has been an activist in the Bicycle Coalition of Delaware Valley, a Philadelphia-area group of people who get to work under their own power. He has pushed a coalition effort to intensify recycling. "Broken glass, lumber, old tires, pop cans, gravel dropped from uncovered dumptrucks—all are overlooked by motorists but are real hazards to the cyclist," he noted. "The coalition firmly supports bottle bills because they will help get the broken glass off the roads and shoulders."

The coalition gives an annual "Cycle and Recycle" award; the latest was presented to the Clean Air Council of the Delaware Valley. The coalition is also behind efforts to get truck tarpaulin bills passed. Zickler observes that sand,

rocks, gravel and other debris often fly off trucks and accumulate on the shoulders, forcing cyclists into traffic and even causing painful spills. "One of these days somebody is going to get killed."

Zickler recently finished a stint as OSC in the Allegheny National Forest and that kept him in his car a lot. But he's still the designated bicycle coordinator for Region 3. He worked with the EPA Employees' Association in a successful effort to get showers and bike lockers installed in the basement of the building that houses Region 3 headquarters. These facilities are far from perfect, however, and not many people know of them. Ofttimes, Zickler says, staf-

fers just "tether their mounts between desks and file cabinets." But then, nobody has ever accused bikers of an excess of stuff-shirted formality. Indeed, their general rule seems to be *aequam servare mentum* (keep your cool).

The coalition is also working to upgrade access to the bridges that connect New Jersey and Pennsylvania, distributing maps of the Delaware Valley showing the least suicidal bike routes, lobbying for more bike paths and promoting the health and fitness angle through the media. Meanwhile, Zickler is enjoying the current spell of salubrious summer weather in the region. He'll keep biking until the Delaware freezes over.

People

Retirees

Headquarters

William Fox, 36 years
Allan Clark, 30 years
Ralph Turpin, 30 years
James Ewing, 26 years
Mary Cusata, 33 years
Louis Kasza, 15 years
Margaret Rymasz, 25 years
Walter Muelken, 32 years
William Colony, 29 years
Richard Solomon, 31 years
Carlos Rodriguez, 20 years

Region 2

Rita Scariato, 25 years

Region 10

Charles Bradac, 27 years
Patricia Sugiura, 20 years

Las Vegas

Marlin Tagatz, 32 years
Mary Baker, 23 years
Wesley Smith, 22 years
Richard Park, 34 years

Research Triangle Park

Stanley Richard, 23 years
William Robertson, 20 years

Special Act Awards

Administration and Resources Management

Allan Clark, Jackye Seldon, William Forrest, Robert Swiatkowski, Gerald Yetter, Geneva Gillespie and Kerry Weiss

Pesticides and Toxic Substances

Mary Goldring, Lawrence Cullen, David Kling, Robert McNally, Susan Olinger, Stephen Schanemann, Terence Stanuch, Anita Frankel and Charles Auer

Water

Arnetta Davis

Office of the Inspector General

Garrette Clark, Joseph Kruger, Karen Garnett, Anna Hackenbracht, Lynn Luderer, James Ewing, and William Colony

Sustained Superior Performance Awards

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring

Brenda Harris and Jacqueline Cherry

Management Notes

\$21 Million Contract for Minority Firm

EPA has approved a \$21.5 million contract for Williams, Russell and Johnson, Inc. (WRJ) headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. This is the largest prime contract the Agency has awarded to a minority-owned and operated firm in support of the Superfund Remedial Response Program. It's the first of several large Superfund contracts to be granted to minority businesses and was achieved through the collaborative efforts of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, the Hazardous Site Control Division and the Procurement and Contracts Management Division.

The prime contractor will be assisted by three other minority entrepreneurs: D.C. Johnson and Malhotra, P.C. of Silver Spring, Maryland; AEPCO, Inc. of Bethesda, Maryland; and Geoscience Consultants, LTD of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Together they will provide technical and engineering services for site management, remedial investigations, feasibility studies and design of remedial actions at abandoned hazardous waste disposal sites in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

New Communications Order

At the Baltimore forum, one concept embraced by each theme group was improved communications. OEA has consequently developed an order for the EPA Directives System, recently approved by the Administrator, which outlines an upgraded, three-part process for communications strategy development. Henceforth, the Agency will undertake community consultation well before a significant decision is made or action taken, notification of the public before major actions or policies are implemented, and follow-up to ensure EPA continues to listen to the people. The Office of External Affairs has set up a communications plan to ensure this broader public role in EPA decision-making, utilizing the Consultation/Negotiation/Consensus-building (CNC) protocol developed at the Forum.

The new procedures require an annual communications plan from each AA and RA outlining communications needs in relation to program priorities, and coordinated with annual operating guidance, workload modeling, SPMS measures, performance-standards setting and travel budgeting. These activities must be joined so that programs can routinely incorporate consultation and negotiation into daily operations.

Lee Thomas declared that the order amplifies and reinforces the Agency's "fish bowl" policy. It will help ensure that EPA managers and staff stay accessible to members of the public with various points of view, and involve clienteles actively in the decision process. Whereas some additional travel or time may be needed to jump-start communication at the front end, consistent and well-planned efforts can obviate protracted debate, misunderstanding and litigation by increasingly sophisticated constituencies. For the first time in EPA history, a complete system for effective public communication is in place.



Region 7 welcomes its new IBM computer (the Logical Mainframe). Pictured at the ribbon-cutting ceremony are (l. to r.): Don Fulford, Director, National Computer Center at RTP; Ed Hanley, Director, Office of Information Resource Management, Headquarters; Regional Administrator Morris Kay; Assistant Regional Administrator Susan Gordon; Willis Greenstreet, Director of Administration at RTP; and Paul Hirth and David Flora, Region 7 ADP staff.

Little Risk in Methanol

The Health Effects Institute (HEI) has released a report concluding that vapor emissions of methanol-fueled automobiles do not pose unreasonable risks to public health, but calling for additional research. The report, entitled *Methanol Vapors and Human Health: An Evaluation of Existing Scientific Information and Issues for Future Research*, was prepared by HEI's Health Research Committee at the request of EPA. The committee was chaired by Dr. Walter A. Rosenblith, Institute Professor and recent Provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

EPA requested the study pursuant to the Clean Air Act, which directs EPA to ensure that any new technology affecting mobile-source emissions will not pose an "unreasonable risk to public health." The report evaluates the health consequences of the inhalation of methanol exhaust or vapors emitted during self-service refueling. Researchers found that "methanol fuel, under intended conditions of use, does not pose an unreasonable risk to the public health...Concerns about methanol vapor should not prevent government and industry from encouraging the development and use of methanol fuels, assuming that is in the public interest."

Although the available evidence indicates that chronic exposure to low levels is not likely to trigger known mechanisms of methanol toxicity, the report notes that data are insufficient to eliminate entirely the possibility of adverse effects over the long term. Emissions from

Management Notes

methanol-fueled vehicles can be expected to produce ambient concentrations of pollutants lower than those resulting from combustion in gasoline or diesel engines, but may slightly raise exposure to formaldehyde, unregulated in this context.

HEI is a non-profit corporation funded equally by EPA and 26 automotive manufacturers and marketers in the United States. Copies of the report may be obtained from the Health Effects Institute, 215-First Street, Cambridge, MA, 02142, 617/491-2926.

Alky Fuels Get the Go-Ahead

The President's Task Force on Regulatory Relief has recommended that methanol, ethanol and compressed natural gas be exploited to upgrade air quality and cut dependence on foreign sources of oil. Ethanol is distilled from grain; methanol can be derived from natural gas, coal or wood. Alternative fuels could enable many cities to meet the legal deadline for reducing pollution to statutory levels without resorting to such draconian measures as staggered driving days or banning cars from business districts. Such fuels do not contribute to ozone or carbon monoxide pollution and are potentially abundant and price-stable.

The task force announced that GSA would buy at least 5,000 flexible-fuel vehicles, capable of burning the two alcohol fuels and natural gas as well as gasoline, starting perhaps as early as next spring. The Department of Transportation will undertake similar demonstration projects with compressed natural gas for buses.

Other recent indications of interest: California has entered into an agreement with fuel distributors to market methanol at no fewer than 75 filling stations within the next three years. A bill is pending in the Legislature to order the marketing of methanol vehicles. Colorado recently mandated an alcohol mix in fuels for the Denver metropolitan area in order to cut carbon monoxide. Legislation recently introduced in Congress would amend the Clean Air Act to encourage alternative fuels. Ford, General Motors and Chrysler are developing flexible-fuel vehicles; some Ford types are already on the road. Iowa has ordered the use of ethanol-blended fuels in all state government vehicles to boost the market for corn.

Air Pollution Follow-up

During an appearance before the House Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Administrator Lee Thomas was asked to provide follow-up on certain classes of air pollution. Managers will be interested in his reply, which, delayed by the editor because of space limits, follows in condensed paraphrase.

About 3000 hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities (TSDF) nationwide emit a total of 1.5 million metric tons per year of volatile organic compounds (VOC). This is 7 percent of total national VOC emissions in 1985 of 21.3 million tons. VOC emissions from municipal waste combustion are estimated to be 3,400 metric tons per year (about 0.02 percent of the national total).

VOC emissions from Publicly-Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) are changing rapidly due to pre-treatment

regulations for industrial dischargers (which reduce emissions from POTWs but may boost emissions at industrial wastewater-treatment facilities) and restrictions on land disposal of hazardous wastes (which may elevate discharges to POTWs). EPA has estimated that once the pretreatment standards are in effect, air emissions of 129 potentially toxic VOCs from the nation's 24,000 POTWs will be about 30,000 metric tons per year. Over 95 percent of this amount comes from the 1,600 major POTWs. Air emissions from industrial wastewater-treatment plants may significantly exceed the amount from POTWs. Current emissions of total VOC from POTWs would be much greater than 30,000 metric tons per year, but no good estimate of this figure is available....

EPA has a major effort underway to develop regulations for TSDFs under the authority of section 3004(n) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. A large number of technical reports and data have been generated as part of this effort. The first group of TSDF regulations was recently proposed...

EPA is presently assembling a great deal of information on municipal waste combustion (MWC) facilities for inclusion in the report to Congress required by section 102 of the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. This report, scheduled for release within the next few months, will be comprehensive, with technical data on design and operation, emissions, control technology and costs, and research needs. The report will also include an assessment methodology and estimates of health risk for existing and projected municipal waste combustors. Partial emissions data on some 36 pollutants have been reported for MWC facilities...

EPA is performing a risk analysis to help determine whether the rapid movement toward incineration of municipal solid waste represents a potential public health problem and whether it should be encouraged. This issue will also be addressed in the context of the Agency commitment to issue a decision on whether MWC emissions or specific constituents should be regulated under section 112 of the Clean Air Act. If so, EPA will specify a schedule for regulatory action at the same time.

EPA has a compliance program to assure that incinerators are meeting current regulations. Our guidance requires an annual inspection of the largest incinerators and mandates that if violations are found they stop within 120 days. Most of this activity is performed at state and local levels with EPA oversight—or with direct action if the state or local agency fails to move.

Additionally, in order to tighten compliance efforts and raise the compliance level of existing MWCs, EPA has developed an MWC Inspection Manual for use by enforcement officers and inspectors (state/local or regional). It also provides new inspectors with an up-to-date description of the entire MWC operation...

The Administrator was also asked to explain the legality of certain state task force recommendations to mandate the use of oxygenates in gasoline for carbon monoxide control. He replied that EPA is currently studying the propriety of a state-mandated oxygenated fuels strategy in light of the section 211 (c)(4) preemption provision.